IRJĀ'

THE MOST DANGEROUS BID'AH

The scholars of the Salaf warned severely against the bid'ah of Irjā', as it was a deviant innovation that diluted the religion of the Muslims, making major sins and even kufr appear as something trivial. Through Irjā', masses of Muslims began to abandon practice of their religion and replace their faithful works with nothing but worldly business and worse heretical deeds.

They even turned away from learning the religion – as it was sufficient to have some vague condition of "awareness" and focused instead solely upon worldly knowledge.

Slowly, ignorance prevailed to the point described by al Fudayl Ibn 'Iyad (رحيم الله - died 187AH),

"How will you be if you remain to a time when you see people who do not differentiate between the truth and the falsehood, nor between the believer and the kāfir, nor between the trustworthy and the treacherous, nor between the ignorant and the knowledgeable. They will not know the good to be good nor the evil to be evil"
[Al-Ibānah al-Kubra]

Ibn Battah (رحيم الله - died 387AH), commented on al-Fudayl's words by saying,

"Indeed, we belong to Allah and to Him we will return. We have reached that era, heard it, known most of it, and witnessed it.

If a man whom Allah has gifted with sound intellect and deep insight were to investigate, contemplate, and reflect upon the condition of Islam and its people – while following the most decisive path and the most guided way – it would become clear to him that the majority and prominent masses of the people have turned back upon their heels and backslidden.

They have thereby deviated from the goal and turned away from the correct proof. Many people have ended up considering as fine what they used to consider as foul, considering as halāl what they used to consider as haram, and considering as good what they used to consider as evil.

This – may Allah have mercy upon you – is not from the character of the Muslims, nor the actions of those with insight about this religion, nor the deeds of those believing in the religion with certainty"
[Al-Ibānah al-Kubra]

Ibn Battah (رحيم الله) also said,

"The people in our era are like flocks of birds. They follow each other. If a man were to emerge and claim prophethood – despite them knowing that Rasūlullāh (صلى الله عليه و سلم) is the last of the prophets – or claim godhood, he would find followers and supporters for this call"
[Al-Ibānah al-Kubra]

Because much of what has befallen the Ummah is due to this deviant innovation, it is important for the muwahhid mujāhid to have insight about the phenomenon especially in how it pertains to jihad.

SALAF AND THEIR SEVERE WARNING AGAINST IRJĀ'

The Salaf who witnessed the emergence of Irjā' warned against it early on. They knew that it would lead to abandonment of both learning and practicing the religion.

Saʿīd Ibn Jubayr (رحيم الله - died 95AH) said,

"The Murjiah are the Jews of the Qiblah"
[As Sunnah – 'Abdullāh Ibn al-Imam Ahmad]

Ibrahim an-Nakhaʿī (رحيم الله – died 96AH) said,

“I fear the fitnah of the Murjiah for this Ummah more than the fitnah of the Azāriqah [a sect of the Khawārij]”
[As-Sunnah – ‘Abdullāh Ibn al-Imam Ahmad]

He also said,

“I fear the Murjiah for the people of Islam more than their number of the Azāriqah”
[As-Sunnah – ‘Abdullāh Ibn al-Imam Ahmad]

He also said,

“In my opinion, the Khawārij are more excused than the Murjiah”
[As-Sunnah – ‘Abdullāh Ibn al-Imam Ahmad]

He also said,

“The Murjiah left the religion flimsier than a very thin garment”
[As-Sunnah – ‘Abdullāh Ibn al-Imam Ahmad]

He also said,

“The Murjiah invented an opinion, so I fear them for the Ummah. The evil from them is great, so be very wary of them”
[Ash-Sharīʿah – Al-Ājurrī]

He also said,

“I don’t know of a more foolish people by way of their opinion than these Murjiah”
[As-Sunnah – ‘Abdullāh Ibn al-Imam Ahmad]

Mujāhid (رحيم الله – died 104AH) said,

“They start off as Murjiah, then become Qadariyyah [those who deny the Qadar], then turn into Majūs [fire-worshippers]”
[Al-Lālikāʿī]

Qatādah (رحيم الله – died 118AH) and Yahya Ibn Abi Kathir (رحيم الله – died 129AH) both said,

“There is no deviance more feared by us for the Ummah than Irjā’”
[As-Sunnah – ‘Abdullāh Ibn al-Imam Ahmad]

Muhammad Ibn ‘Ali Ibn al-Husayn (رحيم الله – died 118AH) said,

“There is nothing in day or night more similar to the Jews than the Murjiah”
[Al-Lālikā’ī]

Az-Zuhrī (رحيم الله – died 124AH) said,

“No deviance was innovated after the advent of Islam more harmful to its people than Irjā’”
[Ash Sharī’ah – Al-Ājurrī]

Mansur Ibn al-Mu’tamir (رحيم الله – died 133AH) said,

“The Murjiah and the Rāfidah are the enemies of Allah”
[Al-Lālikā’ī]

Mughīrah ad-Dabbī (رحيم الله – died 133AH) said,

“By Allah who there is no god but He, I fear the Murjiah more than the fussāq [sinful] for this religion”
[As-Sunnah – ‘Abdullāh Ibn al-Imam Ahmad]

Al-A’mash (رحيم الله – died 148AH) said,

“By Allah who there is no god but He, I do not know of anyone more evil than the Murjiah”
[As-Sunnah – ‘Abdullāh Ibn al-Imam Ahmad]

Sufyan ath-Thawrī (رحيم الله – died 161AH) said,

“The religion of Irjā’ is an innovated religion”
[As-Sunnah – Al-Khallāl]

He also said, while turning the pages of the Qur’ān,

“No one is farther from it [the Qur’ān] than the Murjiah”
[Al-Lālikā’ī]

Sharīk (رحيم الله – died 177AH) said,

“The Murjiah are the filthiest people. The Rāfidah were filthy enough, but the Murjiah lie against Allah”
[As-Sunnah – ‘Abdullāh Ibn al-Imam Ahmad]

Ibnul-Mubarak (رحيم الله – d. 181AH) was asked,

“Who emerges first, the Dajjal or the Beast?”

He replied,

“The Jahmī so-and-so being appointed as a judge over Bukhara is more severe for the Muslims than the emergence of the Beast or the Dajjal!” The judge was from the extreme Murjiah
[As-Sunnah – ‘Abdullāh Ibn al-Imam Ahmad]

An-Nadr Ibn Shumayl (رحيم الله – died 204AH) was asked about Irjā’ so he answered,

“It is a religion in agreement with the desires of the kings by which the Murjiah obtain some of the kings’ dunyā and lose some of their own religion”
[Al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah]

If the Salaf warned so severely against Irjā’, how can this innovation be so grossly ignored by the Muslims?

ORIGIN AND MEANING OF IRJĀ'

Irjā' was a reaction to the deviance of the Khawārij. The Murjiah attempted to distance themselves from the Khawārij without adopting the Sunnah; in doing so, they invented their own sect. This was best explained by the scholar of the Salaf,

Saʿīd Ibn Jubayr (رحيم الله), who said,

"The example of the Murjiah is like that of the Sabians. They went to the Jews and asked them, 'What is your religion?' They answered, 'Judaism.' They asked, 'What is your book?' They answered, 'The Tawrāh.' They asked, 'Who is your prophet?' They answered, 'Musa.' They asked, 'What is there for those who follow you?'

They answered, 'Jannah.' Then they went to the Christians and asked them, 'What is your religion?' They answered, 'Christianity.' They asked, 'What is your book?' They answered, 'The Injīl.' They asked, 'Who is your prophet?' The answered, ''Isa.' They asked, 'What is there for those who follow you?' They answered, 'Jannah.' They then declared, 'We are between these two religions'"
[Al-Lālikāʾī]

The Murjiah countered the Khawārij who made the performance of all obligations and abandonment of all sins essential for one to be Muslim, by responding with their own innovation, claiming that the abandonment of all obligations and the performance of all sins does not affect one's Iman even if one were to completely abandon the pillars of Islam!

They expelled action from the reality of Iman thereby "delaying" action beyond Iman's definition, and this is the linguistic root for the word Irjā', as Irjā' means "**a delay**."

Their innovation has numerous characteristics, manifestations, and practical consequences – some of which will be discussed – but it is important first to remember that the superficial agreement of some scholars and du'āt with the Salaf's definition of Iman does not mean they have freed themselves of Irjā'.

SALAF'S DEFINITION OF IRJĀ'

The original Murjiah expelled actions from the definition of Iman, leaving only the statements of the heart and tongue within its essence, the statement of the tongue being the testimony that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is Allah's Messenger.

They also claimed that Iman does not increase nor decrease. Their understanding of Iman had a number of implications, consequences, and transformations, most important of which are that the complete abandonment of obligations does not affect one's Iman, that hypocrisy does not exist as a phenomenon, and that ignorance of the famous and well-known matters of the religion – known to every Muslim by necessity – is inconsequential.

SUBMISSION IS INCONSEQUENTIAL ACCORDING TO THE MURJI'AH

The Murjiah opposed Ahlus-Sunnah by claiming that submission of the limbs to Allah was not an essential part of faith.

Sufyan Ibn 'Uyaynah (رحيم الله – died 199AH), was asked about Irjā', so he replied,

"The Murjiah say that Iman is a statement. And we say it is statements and actions. The Murjiah obliged Jannah for one who testifies that there is no god but Allah while he resolves in his heart to abandon the obligations.

They called abandonment of the obligations a sin just like any other sin, although they are not equal, for committing sins without istihlāl (considering the sin to be halāl) is merely sinful, whereas abandoning the obligations consciously without ignorance or excuse is kufr.

What clarifies this is the matter of Adam (عليه و سلم), Iblis, and the Jewish rabbis. As for Adam, then Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) forbade him from eating from the Tree and made it haram for him, but he consciously ate from it to become an angel or become immortal, so he was called disobedient without kufr.

As for Iblis (may Allah curse him), then Allah obligated upon him a single prostration but he consciously refused it, so he was called a kāfir. As for the Jewish rabbis, then they knew the description of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم) and that he was a prophet and messenger, just as they knew their own children, and they acknowledged this with their tongues, but they did not follow his Sharīʿah, so Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) called them kuffār.

So, violating the prohibitions is like the sin of Adam (عليه و سلم) and that of other prophets. As for abandoning the obligations with refusal, then it is kufr like the kufr of Iblis (may Allah curse him). As for abandoning the obligations with awareness but without refusal, then it is kufr like the kufr of the Jewish rabbis. And Allah knows best"
[As-Sunnah – 'Abdullāh Ibn al-Imam Ahmad]

Al-Humaydī (رحيم الله – died 219AH) said,

"I was told of people who say, 'Whoever acknowledges the prayer, zakāh, fasting, and hajj, but does not perform any of them until he dies, and prays with his back to the Qiblah until he dies, then he is a believer as long as he doesn't deny these obligations, if he knows that not denying these obligations ensures his faith and if he acknowledges the obligations and the direction of the Qiblah.' I said: This is open kufr and in opposition to Allah's book, His Messenger's Sunnah, and the Muslims' scholars.

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) said,

{And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion, inclining to truth, and to establish prayer and to give Zakāh. And that is the correct religion}
[Surah Al-Bayyinah 98:5]"
[Al-Lālikāʾī]

Imam Ahmad (رحيم الله) also commented,

"Whoever says this has disbelieved in Allah and rejected Allah's order and what the Messenger came with"
[Al-Lālikāʾī]

Ishāq Ibn Rāhawayh (رحيم الله – died 238AH) said,

“The Murjiah fell into extremism to the point that some of them said, ‘Whoever abandons the obligatory prayers, the Ramadan fast, the Zakāh, the hajj, and the obligations in general without denying their obligatory status, then we do not make takfir of him and his matter is with Allah thereafter because he acknowledges these obligations.’ These are the Murjiah about whom there is no doubt”
[Masail al-Imam Ahmad wa Ishāq Ibn Rāhawayh]

The Salaf also used as proof:

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) says:

{And when the sacred months have passed, then kill the Mushrikin wherever you find them and capture them and besiege them and sit in wait for them at every place of ambush. But if they should repent, establish prayer, and give Zakāh, let them [go] on their way. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful}
[Surah At-Tawbah 9:5]

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) says:

{But if they repent, establish prayer, and give Zakāh, then they are your brothers in religion; and We detail the verses for a people who know}
[Surah At-Tawbah 9:11]

These verses indicate that the mushrikīn’s establishment of prayer and payment of Zakāh are conditions for their repentance from shirk to be accepted. The scholars also used as proof all verses that indicate that turning away from the Messenger (صلى الله عليه و سلم) – by completely abandoning obedience to him – is kufr.

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) says:

{Say, “Obey Allah and the Messenger.” But if they turn away – then indeed, Allah does not like the disbelievers}
[Surah Al ‘Imran 3:32]

They also used as proof the hadith reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim on the authority of ‘Umar and Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه). In it, Jibril (عليه و سلم) said to the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم), “O Muhammad, tell me about Islam.”

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم) said,

“Islam is to testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is Allah’s Messenger, to establish the prayer, to give the Zakāh, to fast Ramadan, and to perform hajj if you are able to.”

In another narration,

Jibril asked him, “If I do so, then I am a Muslim?” He replied, “Yes”
[Sahih: Reported by Ibn Mandah]

They also use as a proof the hadith of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم),

“I was ordered to fight the people until they testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is Allah’s Messenger, establish the prayer, and pay the Zakāh. If they do so, then they have protected their blood and wealth from me except by the right of Islam. And their account is with Allah”
[Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

They also use as a proof the hadith of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم),

“Whoever prays our prayer, faces our Qiblah, and eats the meat of our slaughtered animals, then he is the Muslim who has the protection of Allah and His Messenger”
[Reported by al-Bukhari on the authority of Anas]

They also used as proof the ijma” of the Sahābah in considering the abandonment of prayer to be apostasy and the ijma” of the Sahābah in declaring those tribes who resisted zakāh to be apostates.

The latter is the evidence proving the kufr of parties who forcefully resist other clear-cut and famous sharʿī rulings such as the prohibition of khamr (alcohol), the prohibition of incest, and the prohibition of ribā (usury).

Al-Marwazī (رحيم الله – died 294AH) said,

“We then mentioned the reports narrated from the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم) declaring the kufr of he who abandons prayer, expelling him from the religion, and legalizing the killing of one who resists performing it. Also, similar reports reached us from the Sahābah (رضي الله عنه). Nothing reached us from them contradicting this”
[Ta'dhīm Qadr As-Salah]

Al-Fudayl Ibn ‘Iyad (رحيم الله – died 187AH) said,

“Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) says:

{He has ordained for you of religion what He enjoined upon Nūh and that which We have revealed to you and what We enjoined upon Ibrahim and Musa and ‘Isa – to establish the religion and not be divided therein}
[Surah Ash Shūrā 42:13]

So, the religion is affirmation [of faith] through action which is as Allah described and how He ordered His prophets and messengers to establish the religion. Being divided therein is to abandon action and divide between statement and action.

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) said,

{But if they repent, establish prayer, and give zakāh, then they are your brothers in religion}
[Surah At-Tawbah 9:11]

So, Allah required that repentance from shirk be in both word and deed by establishment of prayer and payment of zakāh.

The people of Ray (false opinions) said,

‘Prayer is not from Iman nor is zakāh nor any other of the obligations.’

They did so lie against Allah and opposing His Book and the Sunnah of His Prophet. If what they said were true, Abu Bakr would not have fought the people of apostasy”
[As-Sunnah – ‘Abdullāh Ibn al-Imam Ahmad]

Al-Qāsim Ibn Salam (رحيم الله – died 224AH) said,

“So, if they resist zakāh after acknowledging it, offering this with their tongues, having established prayer but only resisted zakāh, that resistance would negate everything before it including their acknowledgement and prayer, just as their refusal to pray before would negate their acknowledgement.

What testifies to this is the jihad of Abu Bakr as-Siddiq (رضي الله عنه) with the Muhajirin and Ansar under his command against the Arab resistance towards zakāh.

His jihad was just like the jihad of Rasūlullāh (صلى الله عليه و سلم) against the people of shirk, as there was no difference between the two jihads with regards to the spilling of blood, the enslaving of families, and the seizing of wealth. And they only resisted zakāh without
denying it”
[Al-Iman]

Ibn Abi ‘Asim (رحيم الله – died 287AH) said,

“Abu Bakr as-Siddiq in my view is the most knowledgeable after Rasūlullāh (صلى الله عليه و سلم) from amongst the Sahābah, as well as the most virtuous, the most zāhid, the bravest, and the most generous of them.

From the proof for this is his statement regarding the people of apostasy, when the Companions of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم) debated with him so that he would accept from the apostates some of the religion, but he refused to accept anything less than all of what Allah obligated upon them or else he would fight them.

He saw that committing kufr with regards to some of the revelation rendered their blood lawful, so he resolved to fight them, and he knew it to be the truth"
[As-Sunnah]

After the initial debate to which Ibn Abi 'Asim refers, the Sahābah reached consensus.

'Umar (رضي الله عنه) said,

"By Allah, as soon as I saw that Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) had opened Abu Bakr's heart to waging war, I realized he was upon the truth"
[Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

Sulayman Al ash-Shaykh (رحيم الله) said,

"Shaykhul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah said when he was asked about the issue of fighting the Tatars while they claimed to adhere to the shahādatayn (testimony of Islam) and claimed to follow the basis of Islam,

'Every party that resists the manifest and definite laws of Islam from these people or others, then it is obligatory to fight them until they comply with its laws even if they pronounce the shahādatayn and follow some of its laws, just as Abu Bakr and the Sahābah (رضي الله عنه) fought those who resisted the zakāh.

The fuqaha" after them agreed upon this.' He then said, 'So any resistant party that resists some of the obligatory prayers, fasting, hajj, or resists abiding by the prohibition of spilling blood, looting wealth, alcohol, gambling, incest, or resists adherence to jihad against the kuffār or the enforcement of jizyah upon Ahlul-Kitāb, or abiding by anything else of the obligations and prohibitions of the religion, those rulings which no one has an excuse for being ignorant of or abandoning and which the individual commits kufr by denying, then the resistant party is fought over these rulings even if it acknowledges them. This is something of which I know no difference between the scholars.'

He said, 'These according to the most judicious scholars – are not on the same level as the bughāt (the rebels). Rather they have exited Islam on the level of those who resisted zakāh.'

So, if a person who adheres to all the laws of the religion but resists the prohibition of gambling, usury, or fornication is a kāfir whom it is obligatory to fight, how much more so is the case of he who practices shirk with Allah and is called to offer the religion sincerely to Allah and declare bara'ah and kufr towards everything worshipped besides Allah, but instead he arrogantly refuses and is from the kāfirīn"
[Taysīr al- 'Aziz al-Hamid]

Shaykhul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (رحيم الله) also said,

"The Sahābah did not say 'Do you acknowledge that it's obligatory or do you deny its ruling?' This wasn't known from the Khulafā' and the Sahābah.

Rather, as-Siddiq said to 'Umar (رضي الله عنه),

'By Allah! If they were to resist giving me only a short rope that they used to give to Allah's Messenger (صلى الله عليه و سلم), I would fight them over their resistance to giving it.'

So, he made their resistance towards payment the basis for the permissibility of fighting them, not their denial of its obligation.

It was reported that a group from amongst them used to acknowledge its obligation but were stingy in paying it, but in spite of this the Khulafā' dealt with them all in the same manner: killing their fighters, enslaving their families, taking their wealth as booty, and testifying that their fighters are in Hellfire. And they labelled them all people of apostasy"
[Al-Kalimāt an-Nāfi'ah – 'Abdullāh Ibn Muhammad Ibn 'Abdil-Wahhab]

Finally, if the abandonment of prayer is apostasy, how much more so is the nullification of tawhid by major shirk! Similarly, if the resistance with force towards zakāh is kufr, how much more so is the dawah to the pagan religion of democracy and the battle for its cause!

“VIRTUE” OF IGNORANCE ACCORDING TO THE MURJI’AH

According to some of the Murjiah, basic knowledge is not an essential part of Iman even when this knowledge is very widespread and well known. It was reported that one of those accused of Irjā’ was asked in al-Masjid al-Haram if a man who said the following was a believer,

“I know the Ka’bah is true and that it is the House of Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) but I don’t know whether it is this one or not

[in another narration: BUT I DON’T KNOW WHETHER IT IS THIS ONE IN MAKKAH OR ANOTHER ONE IN KHURĀSĀN].”

He (Person accused of Irjā) replied, “He is a believer.”

[Sufyan ath-Thawrī (رحيم الله) said,

“I testify that in the sight of Allah he is from the kāfirīn until he knows that it is the Ka’bah erected in al-Haram.”]

He was then asked if a man who said the following was a believer, “I know that Muhammad (صلى الله عليه و سلم) is true and that he is a messenger

[*in another narration:* I TESTIFY THAT MUHAMMAD IBN ‘ABDILLĀH IS A PROPHET],

but I don’t know if he is the one who was in Madinah from Quraysh or ANOTHER MUHAMMAD

[*in one narration: or* A MAN WHO WAS IN KHURĀSĀN]

[in another narration: BUT I DON’T KNOW IF HE IS THE ONE WHOSE GRAVE IS IN MADĪNAH OR NOT].”

He (Person accused of Irjā) replied, “He is a believer.”

[Sufyan ath-Thawrī (رحيم الله) said,

“I testify that in the sight of Allah he is from the kāfirīn.”]
[Reported by ‘Abdullāh Ibn al-Imam Ahmad, al-Khallāl, and al-Lālikā’ī]

Al-Humaydī and Imam Ahmad both commented on this story saying,

"Whoever says this has committed kufr"
[Al-Lālikā'ī]

It was also reported that the answerer was made to repent because of his replies
[Al-Lālikā'ī]

This exaggerated understanding of excuse due to ignorance (al- 'udhr bil-jahl) is based upon the wrong understanding of Iman not increasing nor decreasing and only consisting of the statement of the heart and the tongue (the acknowledgement of faith in the heart and in words only).

Those who held this belief were confronted with the fact that people have different amounts of awareness, knowledge, and acknowledgment, which implies that Iman can increase and decrease in this regard.

So, some Murjiah responded by saying that Iman is an unspecific acknowledgement of Allah and His Messenger (صلى الله عليه و سلم) – by the heart and tongue – having no details.

Therefore, if someone "acknowledged" that Muhammad is Allah's Messenger, but knew nothing about him or his religion, he could still be considered a believer, even if this information was widespread, well known, and easily learnable and accessible, and even if the person had much time and opportunity to learn this essential and basic knowledge!

This exaggerated understanding of excuse due to ignorance that encompasses every issue, every circumstance, and every individual, has rendered excuse due to ignorance the default supposition and it thereby becomes better for one to remain ignorant than to learn the fundamentals of his religion!

Ash-Shāfi'ī (رحيم الله) said,

"If the ignorant person were excused due to his ignorance, ignorance would be better than knowledge, for ignorance releases him from the burdens of responsibility and relieves his heart of the various punishments.

Accordingly, there is no excuse for the slave with regards to his ignorance after the delivery [of the proof] and the ability to access it.

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) says:

{so that mankind will have no argument against Allah after the messengers}
[Surah An-Nisa' 4:165]"
[Al-Manthūr fīl-Qawā'id]

Ash-Shāfi'ī (رحيم الله) explains that,

"no sane adult is excused for being ignorant of, such as the five daily prayers, that Allah obligated the fasting of Ramadan upon the people, the performance of hajj if they are able to do it, zakāh upon their wealth, and that He prohibited them from fornication, murder, theft, and alcohol, and similarly, matters that the worshippers were held responsible for understanding, learning, and delivering from themselves and their wealth, and that they stop themselves from doing what Allah prohibited them from.

This knowledge is all found explicitly in the book of Allah and is widespread amongst the people of Islam. Their laymen convey it from those who came before them of Muslim laymen. They relate it from Rasūlullāh.

They do not differ in its account nor in it being obligatory upon them. This general knowledge cannot be wrongly narrated nor misinterpreted, and disagreement is not possible with regards to it"
[Ar-Risālah]

Ash-Sharifi's words encompass the obvious laws of Islam, so how much more apparent is the clear-cut obligation of tawhid?

Al-Barbahārī (رحيم الله – died 329AH) said,

"'Umar Ibnul-Khattab (رضي الله عنه) said,

'There is no excuse for anyone regarding deviance he commits while thinking it guidance, nor guidance he abandons while thinking it deviance, for the matters have become clear, the proof has been firmly established, and excuse has been finished'"
[Sharh as-Sunnah]

The scholars mention numerous verses from the Qur'ān to prove that one cannot be considered a Muslim when he ignorantly negates the basis of Tawhid and Iman and opposes the fitrah and the Qur'ān.

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) says:

{A group [of you] He guided, and a group deserved [to be in] error. Indeed, they had taken the devils as allies instead of Allah while they thought that they were guided}
[Surah Al-A'rāf 7:30]

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) says:

{Say, "Shall we inform you of the greatest losers as to [their] deeds? [They are] those whose effort is lost in worldly life, while they think that they are doing well in work." Those are the ones who disbelieve in the verses of their Lord and in [their] meeting Him, so their deeds have become worthless; and We will not assign to them on the Day of Resurrection any importance}
[Surah Al-Kahf 18:103-105]

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) says:

{And if any one of the mushrikīn seeks your protection, then grant him protection so that he may hear the words of Allah. Then deliver him to his place of safety. That is because they are a people who do not know}
[Surah At-Tawbah 9:6]

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) says:

{Those who disbelieved among the People of the Scripture and the mushrikīn would not have departed [from their kufr] until there came to them the clear evidence – a Messenger from Allah, reciting purified scriptures within which are upright writings}
[Surah Al-Bayyinah 98:1-3]

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) says:

{And of the people are some who say, "We believe in Allah and the Last Day," but they are not believers. They [think to] deceive Allah and those who believe, but they deceive not except themselves and perceive [it] not. In their hearts is disease, so Allah has increased their disease; and for them is a painful punishment because they [habitually] used to lie.

And when it is said to them, "Do not cause corruption on the earth," they say, "We are but reformers." Unquestionably, it is they who are the corrupters, but they perceive [it] not. And when it is said to them, "Believe as the people have believed," they say, "Should we believe as the foolish have believed?" Unquestionably, it is they who are the foolish, but they know [it] not}
[Surah Al-Baqarah 2:8-13]

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) says:

{O you who have believed, do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet or be loud to him in speech like the loudness of some of you to others, lest your deeds become worthless while you perceive not}
[Surah Al-Hujurāt 49:2]

Accordingly, there is no excuse due to ignorance for the claimant of Islam regarding its testimony – there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is Allah's Messenger – its meanings and implications (sincerity towards Allah by practicing tawhid and submission to Him by following the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم).

As for the remaining pillars, then a new Muslim might be ignorant of some of them, but this condition is excusable only temporarily, for he is obliged to seek knowledge so as to eliminate this ignorance, as one of the nullifiers of Islam the scholars spoke about is “turning away from the religion of Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) by neither learning it nor practicing it.

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) says:

{And who is more unjust than one who is reminded of the verses of his Lord; then he turns away from them? Indeed, We will take retribution from the criminals}
[As-Sajdah 32:22]”
[Nawāqid al-Islam – Imam Muhammad Ibn ‘Abdil-Wahhab]

Imam Muhammad Ibn ‘Abdil-Wahhab (رحيم الله) also said,

“What you mentioned of your doubt concerning the condition of these tawaghit and their followers and whether or not the proof has been established on them, then this is strange! How can you doubt this after I have clarified it to you over and over?

The person on whom the proof has not been established is the newcomer to Islam and the person raised in a distant nomadic land, or when the matter is obscure … in such a case, takfir is not made upon him until he is informed of the matter. As for the fundamentals of the religion, which Allah clarified and explicated in His book, then the proof of Allah is the Qur’ān, so whoever the Qur’ān reaches has received the proof”
[Ar-Rasail ash-Shakhsiyyah]

HYPOCRISY IS NONEXISTENT ACCORDING TO THE MURJI’AH

In the view of some of the Murjiah, hypocrisy does not exist, neither in its major nor its minor forms.

Sufyan ath-Thawrī (رحيم الله) said,

“The difference between us and the Murjiah is three matters. We say that Iman is statements and actions, whereas they say it is statements without actions. We say that Iman increases and decreases, whereas they say it neither increases nor decreases. We say that hypocrisy exists, whereas they say hypocrisy does not exist”
[Sifat an-Nifāq – al-Firyābī]

Al-Hasan al-Basrī (رحيم الله – died 110AH) was told about people who claim that hypocrisy does not exist and who do not fear hypocrisy. He said,

“By Allah, to know that I was free of hypocrisy would be more beloved to me than to possess as much gold as would fill the Earth”
[As-Sunnah – al-Khallāl]

He (رحيم الله) also said,

“There has never been nor will there ever be a believer, except that he fears hypocrisy. And there has never been nor will there ever be a hypocrite, except that he feels safe from hypocrisy. Whoever does not fear hypocrisy for himself is a hypocrite”
[Sifat an Nifāq – al-Firyābī]

One of the Murjiah said in front of Ayyub as Sikhtiyānī (رحيم الله – died 131AH),

“There is only kufr and Iman,” implying there was no hypocrisy.

Ayyub said to him,

“Go and read the Qur’ān! Every ayah that mentions hypocrisy, then I fear it applies to me!”
[Al-Ibānah al-Kubra – Ibn Battah]

Hudhayfah Ibn al-Yamān (رضي الله عنه) warned of sects that would appear in the future. He said,

"One sect will say, 'We are believers in Allah and our belief equals that of the angels. There is no kāfir nor hypocrite amongst us.' It is befitting of Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) to gather them with the Dajjal"
[As-Sunnah – al-Khallāl]

Ibn Mas'ud (رضي الله عنه) said,

"They say, 'There is no kāfir nor hypocrite amongst us.' May Allah fracture their feet"
[Al-Ibānah al-Kubra – Ibn Battah]

Imam Ahmad (رحيم الله) listed that amongst the matters the Murjiah denied was the description of the hypocrites; he then said,

"Be wary that the Murjiah make you slip away from the matter of your religion"
[As-Sunnah – al-Khallāl]

The Murjiah who denied hypocrisy did so in two different ways. One sect – the Karrāmiyyah – claimed that Iman was only the statement of the tongue even if the heart contained major hypocrisy. They labelled the hypocrites at the time of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم) to be believers, although they believed these "believers" would go to Hellfire.

Another sect claimed that Iman did not increase nor decrease. This claim demanded the denial of minor hypocrisy, as its existence in a person necessitated the decreasing of his Iman.

However, the existence of hypocrisy – both major and minor – is from the most obvious matters clarified by the Qur'ān and Sunnah. In addition to Surah al-Munāfiqūn and Surah at-Tawbah, there are numerous ayahs and ahadith describing this phenomenon.

Rasūlullāh (صلى الله عليه و سلم) said,

“The example of the hypocrite is that of the hesitant lamb between two flocks of sheep. It goes with this flock one time and with the other flock another time”
[Reported by Muslim on the authority of Ibn ‘Umar]

In another narration,

“It does not know which flock to follow”
[Sahih: Reported by an-Nasā'ī on the authority of Ibn ‘Umar]

This hadith indicates that the hypocrite wanders in the Gray zone between kufr and Iman.

He (صلى الله عليه و سلم) also said,

“Indeed, the majority of my Ummah’s hypocrites are its qurrā’”
[Hasan: Reported by Imam Ahmad on the authority of ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Amr]

Al-Bukhari (رحيم الله) said that these hypocritical qurrā’ include,

“The qurrā’ of those who negate Allah’s attributes, the Jahmiyyah, the people of deviant desires, as well as others”
[Khalq Af’āl al- ‘Ibād]

The term qurrā’ was used in the time of the Sahābah to refer to the scholars of the religion, for the scholars are most famous for memorizing, reciting, and understanding the Qur’ān, as in the hadith, “The qurrā’ – whether they were elderly or young men – were the members of ‘Umar’s Shūrā council”
[Sahih al Bukhari]

Rasūlullāh (صلى الله عليه و سلم) said,

“Indeed, what I fear most for my Ummah is every articulate hypocrite”
[Sahih: Reported by Imam Ahmad on the authority of ‘Umar]
These articulate hypocrites are amongst the hadith.

Abu Dharr (رضي الله عنه) narrated that while he was walking with the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم), the Prophet said three times,

“Indeed, there is something I fear for my Ummah more than the Dajjal.” Abu Dharr asked him, “What is this that you fear for your Ummah more than the Dajjal?” He responded, “The misleading imams”
[Sahih: Reported by Imam Ahmad on the authority of Abu Dharr]

The people of bid’ah also have many traits of minor hypocrisy – which is a major sin – in addition to many of them being full-fledged hypocrites and heretics. This is because the root of bid’ah is kufr and it is a gateway to kufr.

Shaykhul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (رحيم الله) said,

“Bida’ (innovations) are derived from kufr, for there is no innovated opinion except that it entails a branch of the branches of kufr”
[Minhaj as-Sunnah]

Bid’ah is also a stance between pure Islam and blatant kufr… another Gray zone of hypocrisy.

Al-Fudayl Ibn ‘Iyad (رحيم الله) said,

“When I see a person from the people of Sunnah, it is as if I see a person from the Sahābah of Rasūlullāh (صلى الله عليه و سلم); and when I see a person from the people of Bida’, it is as if I see a person from the hypocrites”
[Sharh as Sunnah – al-Barbahārī]

He also said,

“The sign of hypocrisy is that a man walks and sits with a person of bid’ah”
[Al-Ibānah al-Kubra – Ibn Battah]

Abu Qilābah (رحيم الله – died 104AH) said,

“I did not find any example like that of the people of bid’ah except hypocrisy, for Allah has mentioned hypocrisy as being conflicting words and conflicting deeds”
[As-Sunnah – al-Khallāl]

Ibn Taymiyyah (رحيم الله) also said,

“When the people of Bida’ possess strength, they are similar to the kuffār in considering it halāl to kill the believers and in making takfir of them, as the Khawārij, Rāfidah, Mu’tazilah, Jahmiyyah, and their branches do.

Some of them fight when they are a strong faction, like the Khawārij and Zaydiyyah. Others strive to kill individuals from their opponents either by using their authority or by deception. When they are weak, they are similar to the hypocrites.

They use deception and hypocrisy, like the condition of the hypocrites. That is because innovations are derived from kufr, for when the mushrikīn and Ahlul-Kitāb possess strength, they wage war against the believers, and when they are weak, they act with hypocrisy towards them”
[Al-Fatawa al-Kubra]

Accordingly, Sallam Ibn Abi Mutī’ (رحيم الله – died 173AH) said that,

The scholar of the Salaf “Ayyub [as-Sikhtiyānī] would label all the people of innovation as Khawārij; he would say, ‘The Khawārij differ in name but agree on the sword’”
[Al-Lālikā’ī]

And the ruling for fighting the people of bid’ah if they take up arms is well known. It is the Sunnah of the fourth righteous Khalifah ‘Ali Ibn Abi Talib (رضي الله عنه) in his fight against the Khawārij. He carried out the Sunnah of Rasūlullāh (صلى الله عليه و سلم) upon these claimants of Islam whose hearts were diseased with innovation and hypocrisy.

The founder of the Khawārij (Dhul-Khuwaysirah) said to the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم), "O Muhammad, be just!" 'Umar Ibnul-Khattab (رضي الله عنه) then said, "O Rasūlullāh, let me kill this hypocrite." He answered, "I seek the refuge of Allah to prevent the people from saying that I kill my companions.

This person and his companions recite the Qur'ān and it does not go beyond their throats. They leave the religion like the arrow leaves the bow"
[Reported by Muslim on the authority of Jabir Ibn 'Abdillah]

Here the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم) did not denounce 'Umar's labelling of the man as a hypocrite, rather the Prophet supported 'Umar's claim by describing a trait of hypocrisy: religious deeds that have no reality in the heart – recitation of the Qur'ān that merely passes through the throat.

He then prevented 'Umar from killing the founder of this deviant sect citing the same reason for not killing the famous hypocrite 'Abdullāh Ibn Ubay (Ibn Salul) who said, "If we return to al-Madinah, the more honoured will surely expel therefrom the more humiliated." When 'Umar asked permission to kill Ibn Salul, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم) told him not to "so that the people don't say that Muhammad kills his companions"
[Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim on the authority of Jabir Ibn 'Abdillah]

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم) said,

"They [the Khawārij] will kill the people of Islam and leave the people of idolatry alone. If I reach their time, I will kill them [until they are eradicated] just as the people of 'Ad were eradicated"
[Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim on the authority of Abu Saʿīd al-Khudrī]

The above ahadith show the similarity between hypocrisy and innovation and their common root. The last narration also shows the Sunnah of Rasūlullāh (صلى الله عليه و سلم) towards the Khawārij. Again, some of the modern day Murjiah are confused.

They think that total abandonment of jihad is an absolute trait of hypocrisy, and because the modern-day hypocrites participate in battles and defend frontlines, they could not be considered hypocrites.

They forget that Dhul-Khuwaysirah and 'Abdullāh Ibn Salul both participated in fierce battles, that the Khawārij fought battles for the sake of their deviance, and that the Bedouin hypocrites fought battles during the wars of apostasy on the side of Musaylamah and those who resisted zakāh.

The hypocrites abandon battles when there is no worldly gain in return, when it does not serve their hypocritical interests, and when the expected hardship is unbearable for them.

Hudhayfah (رضي الله عنه) heard someone supplicate, "O Allah, eradicate the hypocrites." Hudhayfah told him, "If they were eradicated, you would not be able to exact revenge on your enemies"
[As-Sunnah – al-Khallāl]

This is in accordance with the hadith of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم),

"Indeed, Allah will aid this religion through people who have no share of the religion"
[Hasan: Reported by Imam Ahmad on the authority of Abu Bakrah]

Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) said,

"We took part in a battle with Rasūlullāh (صلى الله عليه و سلم). He said about a man who claimed Islam, 'This person is from the people of Hellfire.' When the fighting started, the man fought fiercely until he was wounded. It was said, 'O Rasūlullāh, the person you said was from the people of Hellfire fought today fiercely and has died.'

So, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم) said, 'He went to Hellfire.' Some of the people almost had doubts. While they were in that condition, they were told, 'He did not die. He had severe wounds and when night came, he could not bear with his wounds, so he killed himself.' The Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم) was informed about this and said, 'Allahu akbar! I testify that I am the slave of Allah and His messenger.'

He then ordered Bilal to announce to the people that, ‘Indeed, no one enters Jannah except a Muslim soul’ and that ‘Indeed, Allah aids this religion by fājir men.’”
[Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim]

The fājir is one who commits fujūr, which is one of the traits of the hypocrites, as in the hadith of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم),

“If four traits are found in a person then he is a complete hypocrite, and if he has one of the traits then he has a trait of hypocrisy until he abandons it. If he speaks, he lies, if he makes a covenant, he betrays it, if he makes a promise, he breaks it, and if he argues he fajar (commits fujūr)”
[Reported by al Bukhari and Muslim on the authority of ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Amr]

Ibn Rajab (رحيم الله) said,

“What is meant by fujūr is that he intentionally leaves the truth to the extent that truth becomes falsehood and falsehood becomes truth. This is from the matters that lying leads to, as the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم) said,

‘Be wary of lies, for lies lead to fujūr and fujūr leads to Hellfire’”
[Jami’ al- ‘Ulūm wal-Hikam]

An-Nawawi (رحيم الله) said while commenting on the word fajar,

“Meaning he inclines away from the truth and speaks falsehood and lies”
[Sharh Sahih Muslim]

The above narrations indicate that hypocrites might take part in jihad and even be crucial to the victory of some battles.

Shaykhul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (رحيم الله) said,

“The hypocrites who said,

{“We believe in Allah and the Last Day”}
[Surah Al-Baqarah 2:8]

but who are not believers are those who are externally believers. They pray with the people. They perform hajj and participate in offensive battles. The Muslims and the hypocrites marry from each other and inherit from each other”
[Majmu’ al-Fatawa]

Imam Muhammad Ibn ‘Abdil-Wahhab (رحيم الله) said,

“The hypocrites at the time of Rasūlullāh (صلى الله عليه و سلم) would perform jihad fī sabīlillāh with their wealth and lives, pray the five daily prayers with Rasūlullāh (صلى الله عليه و سلم), and perform hajj with him”
[Ad-Durar as-Saniyyah]

Furthermore, a number of verses of the Qur’ān were revealed regarding the hypocrites who participated in the battles of Tabuk and Banil Mustaliq, including:

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) says:

{And if you ask them, they will surely say, “We were only conversing and playing.” Say, “Is it Allah and His verses and His Messenger that you were mocking?” Make no excuse; you have disbelieved after your belief. If We pardon one faction of you – We will punish another faction because they were criminals}
[Surah At Tawbah 9:65-66]

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) says:

{They swear by Allah that they did not say [anything] while they had said the word of kufr and committed kufr after their Islam and planned that which they were not to attain. And they were not resentful except [for the fact] that Allah and His Messenger had enriched them of His bounty.

So, if they repent, it is better for them; but if they turn away, Allah will punish them with a painful punishment in this world and the Hereafter. And there will not be for them on earth any protector or helper}
[Surah At-Tawbah 9:74]

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) says:

{Indeed, those who came with falsehood are a group among you…}
[Surah An-Nur 24:11]

The last verse and others from Surah an-Nur cover the events in which the hypocrites started their campaign of slander against the Mother of the Believers, ‘Āyshah (رضي الله عنها). This was during the expedition for the battle of Banil-Mustaliq.

Imam Muhammad Ibn ‘Abdil Wahhab (رحيم الله) said that from the nullifiers of Islam was “backing and aiding the mushrikīn against the Muslims.

The proof is the statement of Allah (سبحانه وتعالى),

{And whoever is an ally to them among you – then indeed, he is one of them. Indeed, Allah guides not the wrongdoing people}
[Surah Al-Mā’idah 5:51]”
[Nawāqid al-Islam]

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) says:

{They want to extinguish the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah refuses except to perfect His light, even if the disbelievers despise such}
[Surah At-Tawbah 9:32]